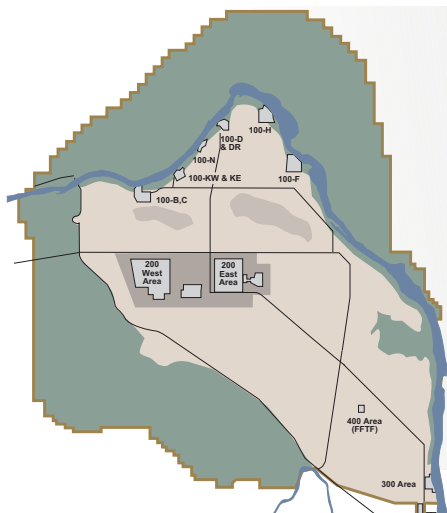


Revised Draft Hanford Site Solid (Radioactive and Hazardous) Waste Program Environmental Impact Statement (HSW EIS)



Background

In April 2002, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) issued a draft Hanford Solid (Radioactive and Hazardous) Waste Program Environmental Impact Statement (HSW EIS) for public review. DOE received approximately 3,800 comments from regulators, tribal governments, stakeholders and the public. Comments focused primarily on a few fundamental concerns:

- What waste could come to Hanford from other DOE sites and the impact that waste would have on the environment
- How DOE's nationwide cleanup plans might impact waste volumes coming to and leaving Hanford
- How transportation of waste to and from Hanford impacts the region

- How Hanford's cleanup plans are affected by this EIS
- Whether additional alternatives should have been considered and evaluated, including alternative disposal facility designs
- Whether it was legal to dispose of waste in unlined trenches, and whether alternatives would comply with other laws and regulations applicable to Hanford
- Whether the document adequately analyzed the full, cumulative impacts of waste coming from offsite along with the wastes that are already here
- Why all other waste types at Hanford were not specifically analyzed, especially disposal of the immobilized low-activity waste generated during the retrieval and treatment of Hanford's tank waste.

WE WANT YOUR INPUT

The Department of Energy is seeking comments from the public on the Revised Draft HSW EIS. Comments can be made in writing, by fax, or by e-mail.

Comments should be directed to:

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Comments will be accepted
until May 27, 2003

The Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility



Placing transuranic waste into a TRUPACT shipping container for shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico



Fact Sheet

What is Different About this Revised Draft?

In response to the comments from the first draft, DOE added:

- alternatives for disposal of immobilized low-activity waste
- an expanded range and depth of storage, treatment and disposal alternatives
- additional information on impacts of transporting waste through Washington and Oregon
- distinctions between the Hanford waste volumes and those projected to come from offsite
- more information from a new analytical tool, the Systems Assessment Capability.



A Mixed Low-Level Waste Disposal Trench

What Waste Types are Evaluated in this Revised Draft EIS?

The DOE needs to store, treat, and/or dispose of existing and anticipated solid low-level waste and mixed low-level waste, store and process transuranic waste and dispose of immobilized low-activity waste.

Low-level waste (LLW) is technically defined by what it is not, and has a wide range of forms, concentration and hazards. LLW can range from very low to very high concentrations of radionuclides, but is generally the kind of waste acceptable for shallow land disposal. Waste volumes analyzed in the EIS are approximately 130,000 cubic meters to 350,000 cubic meters (the equivalent of a football field filled 96 - 257 feet deep).

Mixed low-level waste (MLLW) contains both radionuclides and chemically hazardous components. Waste volumes analyzed in the EIS are approximately 60,000 cubic meters to 200,000 cubic meters (the equivalent of a football field filled 44 - 146 feet deep).

Immobilized low-activity waste (ILAW) is a specific waste stream produced during the treatment of tank waste. Waste volumes analyzed in the EIS are approximately 210,000 cubic meters (the equivalent of a football field filled 153 feet deep).

Transuranic waste (TRU) is defined as waste, other than high-level radioactive waste, and is based on specific radioactive components. It is radioactive waste containing more than 100 nanocuries (3,700 becquerels) of alpha-emitting transuranic isotopes per gram of waste, with half-lives greater than 20 years. Waste volumes analyzed in the EIS are approximately 46,000 - 47,500 cubic meters (the equivalent of a football field filled 34 - 35 feet deep).

What are Some of the Alternatives Evaluated in this Revised Draft EIS?

- construction or modification and operation of treatment facilities for MLLW and TRU waste
- certification of TRU waste generated at Hanford and at other DOE sites for disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico
- permanent disposal of ILAW, LLW and MLLW at Hanford in lined facilities. LLW and MLLW could come from Hanford and other DOE facilities.
- construction, operation and capping (covering) of disposal sites
- transportation of waste, construction materials and capping materials.



Non-destructive examination (x-ray) machine at the Waste Receiving and Processing facility.

Has the Decision Already Been Made to Import Waste to Hanford?

As part of the Final Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, DOE decided that the Hanford Site would be one of two DOE disposal facilities for other DOE sites that have LLW and MLLW. This draft document does not discuss whether waste from other DOE sites should be brought to Hanford. The Revised Draft HSW EIS analyzes the impacts of a range of waste volumes, including a scenario where Hanford receives no offsite waste.

What is DOE's Preferred Alternative?

Based on the results of the environmental analyses, cost and other considerations, DOE has identified a preferred alternative for the HSW EIS. The preferred alternative consists of the following combination of treatment, storage and disposal alternatives:

- build large, centrally-located facilities -- that include liners -- for the disposal of LLW, MLLW and ILAW
- modify an existing building at Hanford and use offsite facilities for the treatment of MLLW
- modify existing buildings and use other resources to certify TRU waste prior to shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico.

Why is this Draft Document Important to You?

Decisions from this document will:

- determine how TRU waste will be certified prior to its shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant
- determine how Hanford will treat its MLLW
- determine how to dispose of LLW, MLLW and ILAW at Hanford
- identify potential impacts to the environment from the disposal of radioactive waste at Hanford
- influence how quickly Hanford and other DOE sites are cleaned up
- select the alternative for treating, storing and disposing of LLW, MLLW, TRU waste and ILAW.

What Will Happen After the 45-Day Public Comment Period of the Revised Draft HSW EIS is Complete?

A final HSW EIS will be prepared that addresses comments received during this public comment period. After approval of the final HSW EIS, the Department of Energy will decide what action it will take based on the results evaluated in the document. Proposed decisions will be announced prior to a 30-day waiting period required by the National Environmental Policy Act. After the 30-day period, DOE will publish its Record(s) of Decision in the Federal Register identifying what waste storage, treatment and disposal activities it will implement at the Hanford Site.

Fact Sheet

How Can You Become Involved?

A 45-day public comment period on the Revised Draft HSW EIS began April 11 and ends May 27, 2003. Your comments will provide feedback that could influence the final decision(s) resulting from this draft EIS. The Department of Energy will consider all comments before finalizing the EIS.

Comments should be directed to:

Michael Collins, NEPA Document Manager

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**U.S. Department of Energy
Public Reading Room**

Washington State University, Tri-Cities
Consolidated Information Center, Room 101-L
2770 University Drive
Richland, Washington
Attn: Janice Parthree (509) 372-7443

Public Meetings

Revised Draft Hanford Solid Waste EIS Public Meetings

May 1, 2003

Red Lion Hanford House
Columbia Room
802 George Washington Way
Richland, Washington

May 7, 2003

WestCoast River Inn
Shoreline B Room
700 N. Division
Spokane, Washington

May 12, 2003

Best Western
Blue Mountain Room
1711 21st Street
La Grande, Oregon

May 13, 2003

Radisson Hotel Portland
Mt. Helen/Mt. Hood Room
1441 NE Second Avenue
Portland, Oregon

May 14, 2003

Hood River Inn
Best Western
Gorge Room
1108 East Marina Way
Hood River, Oregon

May 15, 2003

Woodland Park Zoo
Auditorium
50th and Fremont Ave. N.
Seattle, Washington

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. - Informal discussion
with the EIS document manager

7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. - Briefing and Public Comment

*Oral and written comments will be
accepted at the public meetings.*

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Department of Energy
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Richland WA, 99352

Fact Sheet